

Message Text

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61

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 MC-02 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-13 OMB-01 RSR-01 AID-20 /162 W

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R 261855Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5788

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

USINT BAGHDAD BY POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN, IR, PK

SUBJECT: INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTS ON IRANIAN ARMS

BUILD-UP

BEGIN SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER SWARAN SINGH RESPONDED TO A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ON THE IRANIAN ARMS BUILD-UP AND THE POSSIBILITY OF IRANIAN ASSISTANCE TO PAKISTAN DURING THE LOK SABHA DEBATE JULY 26. HE APPEARED ANXIOUS TO DAMPEN APPREHENSIONS REGARDING IRAN'S INTENTIONS: END SUMMARY

1. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THERE HAD BEEN PRESS REPORTS ON JUNE 30 THAT THE SHAH HAD SAID IRAN WOULD HELP PAKISTAN IF INDIA ATTACKS, SINGH SAID INDIA HAD NOT ATTACKED PAKISTAN IN 1965 OR IN 1971 AND, IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUESTION, SAID IRAN HAD NEVER HELD IN 1965 OR 1971 THAT PAKISTAN HAD BEEN ATTACKED. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN ASSURED DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO IRAN THAT IRAN WOULD USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH PAKISTAN TO ENCOURAGE
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A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS IN THE SUB-

CONTINENT.

2. IN REPLY TO FURTHER QUESTIONS, SINGH SAID THE SHAH HAD TAKEN THE POSITION IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND PRESS INTERVIEWS THAT ARMS IN IRAN'S POSSESSION WERE NOT LIKELY TO BE AVAILABLE TO PAKISTAN UNLESS PAKISTAN WAS ATTACKED OR THE INTEGRITY OF PAKISTAN WAS ENDANGERED. HE INTERPRETED THE REFERENCE TO DANGER TO THE INTEGRITY OF IRAN TO MEAN THAT IF PROBLEMS IN BALUCHISTAN OR OTHER PROVINCES TOOK A SHAPE WHICH THREATENED IN A MAJOR WAY THE INTEGRITY OF PAKISTAN, THEN IRAN'S HELP MIGHT BE AVAILABLE TO COUNTER THE SITUATION. IF IRAN GAVE SUCH ASSISTANCE, THAT WOULD BE A MATTER BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES INVOLVED. AS FOR INDIA, IT DID NOT INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

3. SWARAN SINGH SAID HE COULD NOT SPECULATE ON WHAT HELP PAKISTAN MIGHT GET FROM IRAN IN THE EVENT OF ANOTHER INDO-PAKISTAN CONFLICT. MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS SURENDRAPAL SINGH SAID THAT ACCORDING TO INDIA'S INFORMATION AND PRESS REPORTS FROM PAKISTAN, TRANSFER OF SOME ARMS AND EQUIPMENT FROM IRAN TO PAKISTAN HAD TAKEN PLACE DURING EARLIER CONFLICTS; THE MATTER WAS BEING TAKEN UP IN APPROPRIATE QUARTERS. ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER IRAN WAS TRAINING PAKISTANIS IN THE USE OF SOPHISTICATED MILITARY EQUIPMENT, GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID MERELY THAT ASSISTANCE IN MILITARY TRAINING BY ONE COUNTRY TO ANOTHER WOULD NOT BE UNUSUAL.

4. COMMENTING ON A REPORTED REMARK BY IRAQ'S FOREIGN MINISTER THAT IRAN'S MASSIVE BUILD-UP COULD BE A THREAT TO PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE REGION, SWARAN SINGH SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS IN TOUCH WITH IRAQ AND THAT HE HAD PAID A VISIT TO IRAQ SOME TIME AGO. THERE WERE SEVERAL UNRESOLVED PROBLEMS BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN, AND HE COULD UNDERSTAND IRAQ'S REACTION TO IRAN'S ARMS BUILD-UP.

5. AS TO THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US ON THE SUPPLY OF ARMS TO IRAN, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT IT APPEARED THE US WOULD BE A MAJOR SOURCE IRANIAN ARMS. THE US WAS ASKING A STIFF PRICE FOR THESE ARMS AND IRAN COULD AFFORD TO PAY. BRITAIN WAS ALSO SELLING ARMS TO IRAN. THE FACT WAS THAT A NUMBER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF GOVERNMENTS WERE PREPARED TO SELL ADVANCED ARMS TO COUNTRIES THAT COULD PAY FOR THEM.

6. SWARAN SINGH MAINTAINED THAT THERE WAS NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN DEFENSE MINISTER RAM'S EXPRESSION OF APPREHENSION OVER IRAN'S ARMS BUILD-UP AND SINGH'S COMMENTS ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO IRAN. HE HAD MADE SEVERAL STATEMENTS THAT LARGE-SCALE ACQUISITION OF ARMS BY COUNTRIES IN THE REGION COULD POSE A PROBLEM

FOR INDIA. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT INDIA HAD DECIDED TO
HAVE A DIALOGUE WITH IRAN TO SEE WHETHER IT WOULD BE
POSSIBLE TO ASCERTAIN THAT THESE APPREHENSIONS MIGHT NOT
MATERIALIZE.
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